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BACKGROUND

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Immigration Enforcement in Arizona—1997-2000

The Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) long-term enforcement strategy in Arizona, and across the southern border, has been to gain control of the busiest illegal crossing corridors, then expand that control to the more remote areas as new resources become available.

In 1994, INS launched Operation Safeguard, an aggressive initiative that brought new agents, equipment and technology to the Tucson Border Patrol Sector. The goal of Operation Safeguard is to heighten deterrence and improve control along the nearly 300 miles of international border in Arizona.

Early on, the main focus of Operation Safeguard was the Nogales area, and those efforts have paid off. In 1996, Nogales was the busiest illegal immigration corridor in Arizona. Since that time, Border Patrol apprehensions in the Nogales area have gone down by more than 30 percent. During that same period, the crime rate in Nogales declined by more than 50 percent.

The increased enforcement pressure in Nogales forced the alien smugglers to shift their operations to the Douglas-Naco corridor. In response, INS has increased the resources in that area significantly; by the end of this fiscal year, 534 permanent agents will be stationed in the Douglas-Naco corridor, a 65-percent increase over 1997.

The aim of INS' comprehensive border enforcement effort, which includes Operation Gatekeeper in California, and Operations Hold the Line and Rio Grande in Texas, is to reduce the adverse effects of illegal immigration and improve the quality of life for residents along the immediate border and throughout the nation. In support of this effort, Congress has provided INS with a substantial increase in resources. In the last three years, the number of Border Patrol agents permanently assigned to the Tucson Border Patrol Sector has increased by 54 percent, climbing from 875 in fiscal year 1997 to more than 1,350 today.

The new deployment strategy being implemented as part of the expansion of Operation Safeguard is designed to address this shift in border crossing patterns and build on the border enhancements that have already been put into place in Arizona. This Administration has made a long-term commitment to building a border that

works, and promotes commerce and tourism, while at the same time deterring those who attempt to come here illegally.

Tucson Sector Border Resources

	FY 1997	Current	Remarks
Border Patrol Agents	875 permanent agents	1356 permanent agents	In addition, there are 127 temporary agents currently deployed to Tucson
Anti-smuggling Unit (ASU) agents	13 anti-smuggling unit agents	16 anti-smuggling unit agents	10 new ASU agents will be added this year
Fencing	8.4 miles of primary fencing	9.1 miles of primary fencing	An additional 2 miles of fencing is planned for the Douglas area.
Lighting	none	1.3 miles of permanent lighting in Douglas	Lighting additions: 15 portable lighting units, and 1.8 miles of permanent lighting.
Infrared (night vision) Scopes	16	22	Aids detection and deterrence of illegal crossers
Underground Sensors	699	1269	High-tech detection of illegal immigrants
Skywatcher Mobile Towers	none	3	Provides expanded surveillance capabilities
Low-light television cameras	Not available	13 cameras in Nogales 4 in Douglas 8 in Naco	Increases efficiency by allowing one agent to monitor multiple locations simultaneously
Vehicles	260	1,254	Fleet size has more than tripled.
Aircraft	5 helicopters	6 helicopters 2 fixed wing aircraft	Critical support for agents on the ground
All-terrain vehicles	none	6	An additional 14 ATVs will be added this year.
Horse Patrol	2 horse units	4 horse units	Patrolling in rough terrain

In Fiscal Year 2000, the Tucson Border Patrol Sector has submitted more than 2,000 alien smuggling cases to the U.S. Attorney's Office for prosecution. The Sector accounted for 31 percent of all Border Patrol prosecutions on the Southwest border in FY 1999. In addition, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Arizona leads the nation in prosecuting alien smuggling cases, prosecuting 328 smuggling cases in Fiscal Year 1999.